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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07359 110913Z

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SUBJ: WESTERN PUBLICATIONS IN USSR

REF: MOSCOW 5402, MOSCOW 6079

1. PRESS AND CULTURAL COUNSELOR AND PRESS ATTACHE MET MAY 7 WITH MEZHDUNARODNAYA KNIGA OFFICIALS, PRESIDENT YURIY LEONOV, DIRECTOR OF IMPORTS VALENTIAN KOLOSOVA, AND CHIEF OF US IMPORTS LIDIA ANDRUSHCHENKO, TO DISCUSS AVAILABILITY OF US PUBLICATIONS IN USSR.

2. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTIONS, LEONOV SAID HE PLEASED SUBJECT RAISED SINCE EXCHANGE OF PUBLICATIONS BETWEEN US AND USSR IS NOT "NORMAL." ON ONE HAND, LEONOV SAID USSR IMPORTS FAR MORE BOOKS FROM US THAN IT EXPORTS TO US: STATISTICS FOR 1974 CITED 1683 RUBLES WORTH PURCHASED BY USSR FROM US AND 777 SOLD TO US; FOR 1975 USSR PURCHASED 1955 RUBLES WORTH AND SOLD 681.

IN SPITE OF THIS IMBALANCE, LEONOV CLAIMED USSR ATTEMPTS TO BUY EVEN MORE FROM US BUT IS REFUSED BY MANY US PUBLISHERS WHO WILL NOT PERMIT SALES TO PERIODICALS TO "COMMUNISTS." LEONOV SHOWED

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 07359 110913Z

EMBOFFS ORDER FORM FOR "PIPELINE AND UNDERGROUND UTILITIES CON-

STRUCTION" WHICH HAD BEEN RETURNED STAMPED "NO IRON CURTAIN COUNTRIES," AND HE REFERRED TO TRADE CATALOGUE OF US PUBLICATIONS WITH SUCH NOTATIONS AS "NO SUBSCRIPTIONS ACCEPTED FROM IRON CURTAIN COUNTRIES" FROM SUCH PERIODICALS AS "AMERICAN PAINT JOURNAL." IN AN ASIDE, LEONOV REMARKED TO EMBOFFS "YOU KNOW, WE GET ALL THESE PUBLICATIONS ANYWAY," BUT HE AGAIN EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE AND WONDERED WHETHER THERE WAS EXPLANATION OF THE REFUSALS TO ACCEPT ORDERS FROM USSR.

3. ACTION: EMBOFFS SUGGESTED SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES FOR REFLECTIONS SUCH AS PROBLEMS SMALL JOURNALS ENCOUNTER IN OVERSEAS DELIVERY. NEVERTHELESS, WE DO NOT HAVE SPECIFICS ON WHY ABOVE CITED PERIODICALS, AND OTHER SON BAKERIES, PLASTICS, INTERIOR DESIGN, SNACK FOODS, ETC. WOULD SPECIFICALLY REJECT ORDERS FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, IN SOME CASES ONLY FROM THE USSR. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON THIS SITUATION.

4. MK OFFICIALS CLAIMED THAT ANY USSR PUBLICATIONS ON PUBLIC SALE COULD BE ORDERED FROM US, BUT ADMITTED THAT SOME JOURNALS ARE NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION IN USSR.

5. LEONOV RETURNED TO COMPLAINT THAT US WAS LITTLE INTERESTED IN USSR PUBLICATIONS, CLAIMING THAT DURING HIS 25 YEARS WITH MK (FOUR YEARS -1964 TO 1968-AS MK REP IN WASHINGTON) HE HAD CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTED TO INTEREST US EDITORS, UNIVERSITIES, ETC. IN SOVIET PUBLICATIONS.

6. TURNING TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN NEWSPAPERS IN USSR, LEONOV SAID MK WILL ONLY PAY SURFACE TRANSPORT COSTS FROM ABROAD. EUROPEAN PAPERS USUALLY ARRIVE IN 2-3 DAYS BY TRAIN BUT SURFACE SHIPMENT FROM THE US IS NOT FEASIBLE. IN ADDITION TO THE TIME PROBLEM, THE COST OF ALL WESTERN PUBLICATIONS IS A GROWING DETERRENT TO SOVIET SALES. LEONOV FINALLY ADMITTED THAT THE ONLY US PAPER ON PUBLIC SALE IS THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (HE DID NOT MENTION THE DAILY WORLD) WHICH BEARS THE DIFFERENCE IN SHIPPING COSTS BETWEEN AIR AND SURFACE RATES. HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT IHT WAS ONLY ON SALE AT TOURIST HOTELS, AIRPORTS AND NOT AT STREET KIOSKS. LENINGRAD WAS ONLY CITY NAMED BY LEONOV OUTSIDE MOSCOW WHERE IHT IS ON SALE. WHEN PRESSED BY EMBOFFS FOR NUMBERS, ANDRUSHCHENKO FINALLY SAID ONLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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60 COPIES OF IHT WERE IMPORTED FOR ENTIRE COUNTRY FOR SALE AT KIOSKS. LEONOV ADDED THAT NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST ARE IMPORTED FOR LIBRARIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES. AGAIN QUERIED ON NUMBERS, ANDRUSHCHENKO SAID ABOUT 75 COPIES OF NYT AND 25 COPIES OF WP WERE IMPORTED FOR ENTIRE COUNTRY, WITH ABOUT SAME NUMBER WALL STREET JOURNAL.

7. EMBOFFS SUGGESTED GREATER US PARTICIPATION IN BOOK EXHIBITS

IN USSR MIGHT PROMOTE GREATER US INTEREST IN SOVIET PUBLICATIONS. LEONOV AGREED AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD STATE COMMITTEE ON PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS WAS INVITING MORE US PUBLISHERS FOR 1977 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT. (ACTING CHIEF OF MFA/CULTURAL DIVISION HAD EARLIER TOLD EMBOFF SAME STORY.)

8. MEETING WAS QUITE CORDIAL AND MK OFFICIALS EXPRESSED HOPES THAT EMBOFFS WOULD VISIT AGAIN, ESPECIALLY IF REPRESENTATIVES OF US PUBLICATIONS WERE IN MOSCOW.
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